

“WORM” and “FAMILIAR”: Two Fatal Shorts (Film Reviews)

Written by Kelly Stewart

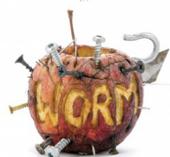
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As the horror film-festival circuit starts to ramp up for 2012, there's a filmmaking team called Fatal Pictures, made up of producer/director Richard Powell and producer Zach Green, to watch out for. Their style is a mix of dark drama and fright that tends to deal with the horrors inside ourselves rather than the world around us.

The duo made their first short, *CONSUMPTION*, in 2008, and more recently completed *WORM* and *FAMILIAR*, both starring Robert Nolan. *WORM* has been out a little while now, screening at events like The Sydney Underground Film Festival, Dark Bridges Film Festival, Toronto Screamfest and The Horror Society Film Fest, but expect more play around the country this year, along with *FAMILIAR* (pictured above).

FATAL PICTURES
PRESENTS
ROBERT NOLAN & GEOFFREY DODD



FATAL PICTURES PRESENTS "WORM" STARRING ROBERT NOLAN & GEOFFREY DODD
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY RICHARD POWELL PRODUCED BY ZACH GREEN
EDITED BY BENJAMIN GILMAN MUSIC BY JACOB GREEN COSTUME DESIGNER PERELL
WWW.FATALPICTURES.COM

Much more of psychological study than a traditional horror film, *WORM* takes us inside the mind of high-school teacher Geoffrey Dodd (Nolan), whose inner thoughts are shared with us in disturbing detail. On the surface, Geoffrey is a seemingly kind, gentle and sane instructor; as we follow him through the course of an average school day, we assume he's just a bitter man having a bad time. But beneath the carefully constructed veneer, something even more sinister is going on in his mind that could burst at any moment.

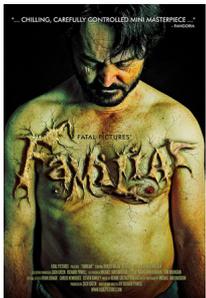
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The glue that holds this film together (and FAMILIAR as well) is Nolan’s performance. There could have been a temptation to play the teacher in an overtly sinister way—regarding his students angrily and so on—but the detachment between his thoughts and actions is so great that it makes the film all the more disturbing. WORM is not a violent piece; in fact, very little actually happens during the course of Geoffrey’s day, but it always feels like something is *going* to happen. This is really a case study of inner emotional violence that could be set off at any moment into the real thing, and that is truly horrifying.

In FAMILIAR, Nolan plays John Dodd (no relation that we know of to WORM’s antihero), a middle-aged married man emotionally detached from his wife and the world. The film is basically broken into two sections: The first half has a similar structure to WORM, where we hear what’s going on in John’s mind. Despite having what appears to be a loving wife, a well-adjusted teenage daughter and a stable home life, John is falling apart from the inside. After hearing the news that his wife is pregnant with another child, he becomes convinced that this is a plot by her to destroy his life and contrives to destroy the unborn child—but then has to deal with a physical monster growing inside *him*.



At first glance, FAMILIAR’s structure is quite similar to that of WORM—but it is only so on the surface. Once again, we see a man coming unraveled, but this time it results much more in actions than in thoughts. In fact, it’s best to view the films together if possible, because WORM sets up an expectation that FAMILIAR will go in the same direction (hence the title), but it doesn’t. The production values are taken up a notch in FAMILIAR as well, thanks to the addition of Michael Jari Davidson as director of photography and the special FX team known as The Butcher Shop (Ryan Louagie, Carlos Henriques and Steven Dawley).

Director Powell has taken the influence of David Cronenberg and mixed it with the inner torment of TAXI DRIVER to create a unique style in these films. Both go so well together and complement each other, one hopes they make a third “Dodd film” starring Nolan, because it would make a great anthology. For more information on these movies, check out www.fatalpictures.blogspot.com

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BOTH MOVIES: 🍷🍷🍷🍷